

REMARKS

Claims 1-7 and 9-11 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claim 1-7, 9 and 10 are amended, and claim 8 is canceled without prejudice to, or disclaimer of, the subject matter recited therein. Specifically, independent claim 1 is amended for clarity, and claims 2-7, 9 and 10 are amended only to improve clarity. No new matter is added. Reconsideration of this application in view of the above amendment and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

The Office Action objects to the specification because of the term "pontic". Applicants submit that one of ordinary skill in the relevant art at the time of the invention would have understood that the term "pontic" refers to an artificial tooth or fixed partial denture to replace a missing tooth (see, for example, PDR Medical Dictionary, 1st Ed. pg. 1408 (1995)). Therefore, "pontic" falls within the terminology generally accepted in the field of dentistry. Thus, it is respectfully requested that the objection be withdrawn.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-7 and 9-11 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. The rejection is overcome by the amendments to independent claim 1.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-4 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Heitlinger et al. (Heitlinger), U.S. Patent No. 4,324,546. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Heitlinger does not disclose any feature/step that can reasonably be considered to correspond to providing a preparation comprising a first anchor and a connecting portion connected to the first anchor, and scanning at least the connecting portion of the preparation, as recited in independent claim 1.

Heitlinger relates to a method of manufacturing replacement prostheses where the patient's teeth are reproduced using electro-optical equipment that is inserted into the patient's mouth (see Fig. 2 and Abstract). Heitlinger scans the patient's mouth in order to obtain the undersurface or tooth-side data of the replacement teeth (see col. 8, lines 29-31). Next, a wax

model is produced of the replacement piece, i.e., the whole prosthesis (see col. 6, lines 17-19). The wax model is scanned to produce the upper, outer or biting surface of the replacement teeth. That is, Heitlinger only scans either the patient's mouth or the whole prosthesis, not a preparation. Therefore, Heitlinger does not disclose providing a preparation comprising a first anchor and a connecting portion connected thereto, and scanning at least the connecting portion of the preparation, as recited in independent claim 1.

Furthermore, Heitlinger does not disclose any feature that can reasonably be considered to correspond to a preparation comprising a first anchor and a connecting portion connected to the first anchor and forming a physical model on the connecting portion to produce a pontic, as recited in independent claim 1.

Heitlinger discloses that, after scanning the patient's mouth, a working model or positive copy of the patient's teeth is milled directly, removing any need for making an impression of the patients' teeth (see Abstract). Then the whole replacement piece is modeled in wax by hand (see col. 6, lines 17-19), not just a physical model on a connecting portion that is part of a preparation. Therefore, Heitlinger does not disclose any feature that can reasonably be considered to correspond to a preparation comprising a first anchor and a connecting portion connected to the first anchor and forming a physical model on the connecting portion to produce a pontic, as recited in independent claim 1

Therefore, independent claim 1 and its dependent claims are patentable over Heitlinger. Thus, it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

The Office Action rejects claim 8 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Guiot et al. (Guiot), U.S. Patent No. 6,287,121. The rejection of canceled claim 8 is moot.

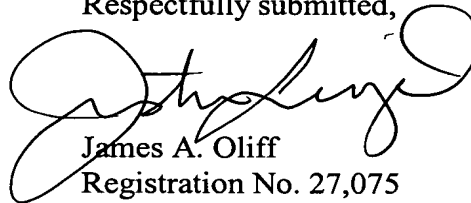
The Office Action rejects claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Heitlinger; and rejects claims 6, 7, 9 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Heitlinger in view of van der Zel, U.S. Patent No. 6,495,072. The rejections of claims 5-7, 9 and 10 are respectfully traversed.

Because claims 5-7, 9 and 10 incorporate the features of independent claim 1, and because van der Zel fails to overcome the deficiencies of Heitlinger, these claims also are patentable over the applied references for at least these reasons, as well as for the additional features that these claims recite. Thus, it is respectfully requested that the rejections be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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